



Minute Man National Historical Park 18th Century Living History Handbook



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Introduction:

On April 19, 1775, British Regulars, colonial militia, and minute men faced off at the North Bridge in Concord, Massachusetts. Ralph Waldo Emerson coined the phrase, “the shot heard round the world” to describe the significance of the brief battle that took place. What had begun as a struggle between the British authorities, determined to enforce the will of Parliament, and the people of Massachusetts, determined to retain their rights as English citizens, soon grew into a war for independence that lasted more than eight years.

Today, Minute Man National Historical Park - - including the North Bridge, the Battle Road, and the Minute Man statue - - protects and interprets the features, events, historic structures, and landscapes associated with the opening battle of the American Revolution on April 19, 1775. More than just a battlefield, Minute Man NHP symbolizes and embodies the evolution of the ideals of freedom and liberty. Minute Man NHP commemorates new horizons in democratic experimentation and citizen responsibility that continued to affect American society generations after the end of the Revolutionary War.

Living History is an important part of our mission to bring the story of April 19, 1775 to life. Understanding of history comes through many senses, not the least of which is imagination. The National Park Service has spent millions of dollars to restore certain parts of the actual battlefield of April 19, 1775 so that our visitors may understand emotionally as well as intellectually that they are standing upon a hallowed battlefield. In other words, we seek to provoke and inspire their imaginations.

Living history fulfills much the same role as the restored battlefield itself. When visitors encounter a living historian, with a convincing overall impression, the effect is that they are looking through a living window into the past. By impacting multiple senses i.e. sight, sound, touch, smell etc. the living historian dramatically increases the tangible links to the intangible stories and universal themes imbedded within the park story.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to preserve and interpret the significant historic sites, structures, properties, landscapes, and events associated with the opening battle of the American Revolution which lie along the route of the Battle of April 19, 1775 and interpret the ideas, causes and consequences of the these events (Long-Range Interpretive Plan).

We collaborate with living history groups to enhance regular interpretive offerings, provide opportunities for community participation, and utilize the skill and perspectives of others to provide services that we simply cannot accomplish on our own.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to establish Minute Man NHP as one of the premiere living history sites in New England, known for quality interpretive and educational programming and superior authenticity standards. Thus we hope to heighten local, regional, and international awareness of Minute Man NHP and its significance in American History.

Planning an Event at Minute Man National Historical Park

The National Park Service has strong partners in those who study the past by stepping temporarily into its clothing and customs and share their passion with the public as reenactors and living historians. There are specific ways that parks interact with living history groups and individuals. Parks consider such factors as:

- What is being proposed
- How the activity fits within the framework of a park's overall interpretive program
- Who proposes the activity
- How many participants and spectators are expected
- What logistical arrangements are necessary
- Where and when an event is scheduled to take place.

Groups in partnership with the NPS should be prepared to discuss these issues with park personnel. The park staff will work with you on standards for authenticity, sources for research and local policies.

We are interested in partnering with groups whose impression covers some aspect of the colonial or revolutionary period, military or civilian or a combination. We seek those units that function in a professional manner, demonstrate high standards of authenticity, incorporate current scholarship, apply interpretive theory, work effectively in collaboration with others, and communicate well with park staff, within their unit, and the public.

If you would like to put together an event with us, please fill out the Living History Event Proposal Form included in this handbook (page 6). This will provide us with a good starting point from which to open the planning dialogue. Once you complete the form, mail or fax it to the Volunteer Coordinator: (978) 318 – 7824
Email: roger_fuller@nps.gov

Choose Your Venue

There are three venues within Minute Man National Historical Park that present opportunities for 18th century living history programming. They are:

- Minute Man Visitor Center
- Hartwell Tavern
- North Bridge

Minute Man Visitor Center (Rt. 2A, Lexington)

The Minute Man Visitor Center is usually the first place visitors stop when arriving at the park. Exhibits include the Battle Road Mural, and a 25 minute multimedia show, "The Road to Revolution." For living historians, it offers limited indoor exhibition space but excellent outdoor space including an amphitheater. There is plenty of room for military drill, a range for musketry, and some "high traffic" areas ideal for those individuals demonstrating some kind of period craft.



Hartwell Tavern (Rt. 2A, Lincoln)

Built in 1733, the Hartwell Tavern was the home of the Hartwell Family, who also operated a tavern here. The faithfully restored tavern sits on a section of the Battle Road, within a restored colonial landscape. The site provides an authentic period setting, perfect for period craft demonstrations, first person theater, military drill, musket firing, etc. Though it is not the most heavily visited site within the park, 300 – 500 people a day is not uncommon during the busy season. The relaxed atmosphere provides living historians a unique opportunity for in depth discussions with park visitors.



North Bridge (Monument St. Concord)

Site of the “shot heard round the world,” the North Bridge is really the “heart and soul” of Minute Man NHP, and receives, by far, the most visitors of any of our sites. The opportunities for interpretation are numerous. They range from the quick “can I take your picture?” to meaningful one on one discussions, to more formalized interpretive programs for large groups. Though not recommended for craft demonstrations, the North Bridge is great for groups who have a set program and are looking for a ready audience.





Living History Event Proposal Form Minute Man National Historical Park

One application should be completed for an organized unit. Individuals are also welcome to submit an application if applying apart from organized group affiliation. This application is also available as a PDF file at

<http://www.nps.gov/mima/supportyourpark/reenactor-resource.htm>

The completed application should be mailed to:

Volunteer Program Coordinator
Minute Man National Historical Park
174 Liberty St.
Concord, MA.
01742

You can also fax this application: (978) 318 – 7800

Unit Name _____

Preferred Venue _____

Possible dates _____

Number of members participating _____

Description of Impression: (Please describe your unit's overall impression plus any other specialized impressions within the unit. You should demonstrate some knowledge of your group's/unit's role in the events of April 19, 1775, and describe how your involvement with Minute Man NHP can enhance the overall interpretation of the park story. If you need more space, use the back or attach an extra sheet of paper.)

Unit Leader / Contact Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____

Email _____

Interpretation

Themes

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas or concepts that every visitor to Minute Man NHP should understand. They are the key ideas through which the park's national significance is conveyed to the public. These themes provide the foundation for interpretive programs and media at the park. The themes do not include everything we may wish to interpret, but rather the ideas that are critical to a visitor's understanding of the park's significance. The following five themes were included in our 1999 Long-Range Interpretive Plan.

1.) Minute Man National Historical Park was the starting place of the American Revolution; here the resolve of citizens willing to seek, stand up for, and die for the ideals of liberty and self-determination was instrumental in the formation of the American identity.

While a series of laws, events, and ideas set the stage for what happened at Concord and Lexington, the shots at the North Bridge were a watershed event in the evolution from diplomacy to armed conflict, and from ideology to action. The Revolution that ensued was the impetus for other political acts around the world. The citizen-soldier risking his life to defend his rights has become a fundamental component of the American character.

2.) The people of Colonial New England developed political, economic and social community structures that fostered an identity different from Britain and led them to challenge British authority.

The English colonists came to North America for religious freedom and economic opportunity, and to build homes and a new life. While there were many similarities between Great Britain and the American colonies, 150 years of colonial experience created a society different from Great Britain with its own laws, social structures, religious practices, economy, politics, agriculture, communication, and educational structures. The revolutionary effort was shaped by the interplay of individual choices and collective effort. While hindsight may give the impression that the outcome of the events at the North Bridge was a forgone conclusion, at the time the individuals involved faced uncertainty and had to make their own choices, including choosing to make economic or physical sacrifices. When the war began, the individuals involved - - men, women, and children, slaves and free, farmers and British soldiers, patriots and loyalists - - had their own opinions as to what they were defending.

3.) The landscapes shaped by the New England colonists, including features such as stone walls, road, fields, orchards, woodlots, and homes, affected the course of the events of April 19, 1775; segments of these landscape elements can be experienced today.

Minute Man National Historical Park preserves an important historical cultural landscape. This landscape is a reflection of the economic, social, and political system and values of the "embattled farmers," their antecedents, and their descendents and can help explain why the War was fought. Experiencing the landscape helps visitors get a sense of place and helps them forge meaningful connections to the past.

4.) The Wayside was home to 19th century Concord authors who kept the spirit of the revolution alive through the creation of a unique American literary identity.

The Wayside was home to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, and Margaret Sidney. The Wayside authors lived the ideals of the Revolution, and expanded these ideals to encompass literary and social reforms. Like others in the 19th century, they were inspired by the Revolution's ideals to carry the logic of liberty one step further and argue for the abolition of slavery and the development of women's rights. They took inspiration from the events and ideas of the Revolution as they helped spawn an American literary revolution and renaissance. In addition to their unique relationship to The Wayside, these authors also affected the way we think about and commemorate the North Bridge, the Great Fields, and other sites in the park.

5.) Minute Man National Historical Park is one of over 380 National Park Service units that help protect the nation's cultural and natural heritage for this and future generations.

Minute Man National Historical Park was set aside to preserve and interpret historical events and scenes. Because the park is part of the National Park System it is subject to other laws and regulations and policies that affect park resources and visitor experiences. For example, although Minute Man is nationally significant for its historical resources, there are management programs in place to protect wetlands or habitat for endangered species, even though wetlands and endangered species do not figure directly in park purpose and significance statements.

Techniques

Interpreters do not simply communicate facts and information, but provide access to meanings. Interpreters inspire an appreciation and understanding of the park and its significance by connecting the tangible resources and associated intangible stories to universal concepts.

For example, a short talk during an infantry/musket firing demonstration might include facts about the flintlock musket, its range, its lack of accuracy etc; as well as how an infantry company at this time would maneuver and deliver its fire. An interpreter's job is to identify the meanings behind the facts. An interpreter might focus on the level of training and teamwork needed to survive on an 18th century battlefield, the role of effective leadership in combat, or the pride, confidence, and sense of unity within a well-drilled infantry unit. Teamwork, leadership, confidence, and unity are universal concepts that most everyone can relate to based on their own life experiences.

An interpreter demonstrating the use of a spinning wheel might provide facts about the techniques involved, the materials used etc. However, behind these tangible facts the interpreter can reach into the larger, intangible story of the non-importation agreements, home manufacture, and the role of patriotic women in the revolutionary movement. These intangibles can then provide links to the universal concepts of liberty, devotion, sacrifice and community.

When talking about the battle itself, you will need to cover the basic facts. Beyond this, an interpreter can touch upon the human experience. For example, the common British soldier, how fatiguing the march must have been, or how desperate the fighting was on the road back to Boston. Or you can talk about the feelings of the colonists alarmed in the middle of the night. Imagine the fear and uncertainty of what the morning will bring, the anxiety of families sending their loved ones into danger, the reassurance of sharing that danger with your neighbors, and the courage necessary to stand up and risk death for your principles.

Of course any of these discussions must answer in some way, **WHY** this is happening. Why are the Regulars in Boston? Why are these communities preparing for war? Why are so many ordinary people willing to commit treason?

Fear, suffering, courage, patriotism, sacrifice, family, community; all these are examples of universal concepts that a good interpreter uses as a catalyst for the audience to make meaningful connections.

Lastly, you must understand that every visitor is different. All audience members arrive with their own unique set of filters. A good interpreter uses his or her skills to help visitors arrive at their own conclusions. We meet this challenge by learning and understanding as much as possible about our audience, what they have come here for.



Authenticity Standards:

The people we portray in living history deserve our best efforts. Remember, they can no longer speak for or represent themselves. When done well, living history can be a unique way to honor them and restore a touch of humanity to their memories.

The reputation of Minute Man National Historical Park, as well as every living history group participating in a park event depends upon everyone striving for and maintaining the highest possible degree of historical authenticity. This includes authenticity in period dress and accoutrements, character role portrayals, and demonstrations.

The following guidelines were adapted from the **Battle Road Committee** website: www.battleroad.org The Battle Road Committee is a group of reenactors, all of whom volunteer their time to research, plan, and put on events related to April 19, 1775 in the Lexington and Concord area. The park works closely with this group when planning Patriot's Day activities. More information is also available at [18th Century New England Life](#)



General Protocol

During living history programs/encampments at Minute Man National Historical Park, historical authenticity standards will be observed and in effect during hours when visitors are on the grounds: generally 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

Participants are required to dress in as authentic and appropriate manner of clothing for the 1770's period for Eastern Massachusetts as is proper and possible. Western frontier and native dress are not acceptable; this includes hunting shirts with fringe, beads, and a general "buckskin" appearance.

- No anachronisms such as: cameras, cell phones, cigarettes, plastic items, wrist watches, modern jewelry, sleeping bags, coolers, non-period glasses or sunglasses, etc., will be used in sight of any visitor during hours of operation. (Because of the expense of period glasses, modern glasses will be accepted if not too obvious [wire frames only]).
- For safety and authenticity purposes clothing should be of natural fiber such as wool, linen or cotton. **Polyester, nylon, velcro, fringe or other synthetic fabric presents a safety hazard and may not be worn.**
- Any modern accoutrements such as company pins, logos, nameplates or any other paraphernalia not authentic to the period may not be worn.
- Bales of straw (provided for bedding) will be opened and spread out. Full bales are out of period, especially when tied with brightly colored nylon cord.

Men's Clothing

- **Frock coat, workman's jacket, sleeved waistcoat, farmer's smock** (non-fringed pullover style acceptable), of wool, linen (flax or hemp), or cotton (or silk if appropriate to the overall impression). Leather coats and frontier/rifle/hunting shirts (the garment with the cape and the fringe) are *not* acceptable.
- **An appropriate sleeved outer garment is required for military impressions.** Those doing military impressions may not "turn out" armed in their waistcoats and shirt sleeves. Companies may not field with matching coats unless doing a British regular army or later-war impression.
- **Shirt:** long, full sleeved, closed neck with stock, cravat, or neck cloth: Wool, linen, cotton in white, natural, or checked.
- **Waistcoat:** wool, linen, cotton (or silk if...). Necessary with frock coat, optional with buttoned workman's jacket or buttoned sleeved waistcoat or smock.
- **Breeches:** wool, linen, leather, or cotton (or silk if...). Trousers are acceptable as part of a lower class impression. Fringed suede frontier-style trousers are not acceptable.
- **Stockings:** over the knee, wool, cotton or linen (or silk if...), white or colors, held up with leather or cloth tape garters. Athletic socks are not allowed.
- **Shoes:** period-style leather shoes with buckles or 2 hole lace up, black or brown (appropriate modern leather shoes may be worn if covered with gaiters)
- **Gaiters:** Optional with period-style shoes. Civilian-style half gaiters preferred to full or half military gaiters.
- **Hat:** Must be worn out of doors. Cocked hat (civilian or military, depending upon your particular impression,) floppy hat, knitted cap, workman's cap.

Women's Clothing

- **Sleeved outer garment** such as full or three-quarter length gown, jacket, caraco, "shortgown", bed jacket, or riding habit of wool, linen, or cotton (or silk if appropriate to the overall impression). Because of the difficulty of obtaining period-appropriate prints, it is recommended that you avoid prints unless you have studied them in detail or can find exact replicas (such as Williamsburg replicas); paisleys, cabbage roses, and 19th century calicoes are not correct. The sleeveless so-called "French bodice" and "English bodice" are not acceptable. A sleeved outer garment is required.
- **Petticoats:** at least three yards in circumference, longer than mid-calf; high-ankle/low-calf suggested. At least one petticoat with full length gown; otherwise at least two. See above concerning prints.
- **Shift:** low necked, sleeves reaching below elbow. Linen, cotton, or wool in white or natural.
- **Stays:** recommended. Since they are not seen, material and pattern are irrelevant. Should provide conical shape to upper body.



- **Neck handkerchief:** recommended. Triangle or folded square of linen, cotton, or wool (or silk...) in white, natural, or small checks or stripes.
- **Apron:** Optional. Wool, linen, or cotton (or silk if...) in solid color or small checks or stripes. No eyelet.
- **Stockings:** over the knee, linen, wool, or cotton, white or colors, held up with leather or cloth tape garters. Athletic socks are not allowed. (As stockings do not show above low calf at most, plain modern knee socks are acceptable and garters are optional.)
- **Shoes:** period-style leather or cloth shoes with buckles or 2 hole lace up, black or brown (appropriate modern leather shoes may be worn if petticoats reach ankles or lower), or period-style clogs or moccasins (workman's ankle height, not calf-high). Shoes are optional but *strongly* recommended; Battle Road takes place in highly-developed suburban locations.
- **Cap:** White or natural. Acceptable cap styles are too numerous to list here, but "mobcaps" (a single circle of cloth gathered with a casing and/or elastic to form a ruffle) are *not* acceptable. Note that a plain cap with front band and gathered back is the simplest to make. A cap or hat is required except for fine ladies and slatterns. No eyelet.
- **Hat:** Low-crowned women's style in straw, chip, or felt, plain or covered, or, if appropriate to the overall impression, a man's civilian-style felt hat. A cap or hat is required except for fine ladies and slatterns.
- **Hair:** Either long, pulled back from the face, and put up, or hidden with a cap. Long or thick bangs should be pulled back off the face. Obviously-dyed hair should be well-covered by a cap. If the overall impression is of a slattern, then loose hair is acceptable.
- **Make-up:** Only if 18th century style (white face paint, beauty spots, etc.). Appropriate only for fine ladies and actresses.
- **Cold weather gear:** Optional. Period-pattern cloaks, capes, tippets, hoods, etc. Wool kerchiefs. For a lowly impression, a length of woven wool used like a shawl. Woven or knitted wool, linen, or cotton (or silk...) mitts, mittens, or gloves. Wool and/or fur muffs.
- **About lace:** Eyelet and tatting are not authentic to the period. Crochet is not acceptable in any form (lace, shawls, etc.). Machine-made lace is acceptable *if* it is in imitation of period-style lace.

Children's Clothing

- **Babes in arms:** shirt or shift, and cap, of linen, cotton, or wool, in white or natural. Frock, shoes and stockings optional. If plastic diapers are used, cover with a cloth.
- **Young children** (unbreeched boys from toddlers through age 3 to 7 and girls from toddlers through early puberty.): shift of linen, cotton, or wool, in white or natural. Child's frock, or "shift dress" with sash. Cap and/or hat for girls (optional but preferred), cap or hat for boys (optional). Stockings as for women. Period-style shoes including moccasins; due to the expense of children's shoes, any black or brown leather lace-up modern shoes, or moccasins, are also acceptable. Shoes and stockings are optional but *strongly* recommended.
- **Older boys:** generally same as men.
- **Older girls:** generally same as women.

Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations

By their nature, any time weapons are used – with or without black powder – there is an increased risk of injury. Park staff and living historians are acutely aware of this and share both the concern and the responsibility for safe practices. Many living history groups hold their members to high safety standards and the NPS depends upon a strong, consistently demonstrated commitment to safety for any person or group involved in a park event. Ultimately, though, it is the National Park Service that is responsible for the safety of an event.

All firing demonstrations will be done according to National Park Service black powder safety regulations, under the direct supervision of a certified NPS Black Powder Safety Officer who will have the final say on the conduct of all historic weapons firing demonstrations. Safety is our primary concern, and our common goal.

Before participating in a living history event involving historic black powder weapons at Minute Man NHP, each unit commander must sign a Historic Weapons Firing Permit (page 16). This permit must be signed by the unit commander and returned to the Historic Weapons Supervisor by mail or fax two weeks prior to the event. The regulations and permit are also available as a PDF file at

<http://www.nps.gov/mima/supportyourpark/reenactor-resource.htm>

Acceptable Weapon Types

Only reproduction firearms may be used at the park. The use of original firearms is prohibited.

Reproduction small arms that **will** be allowed are:

- Early to mid-18th century flintlock muskets, fusils, or fowling pieces.
- British Long Land Pattern
- British Short Land Pattern
- French Charleville

Reproduction small arms that **will not** be allowed are:

- Pistols (may be carried by officers but may not be fired or brandished)
- Blunderbusses
- Percussion-cap weapons
- Bows & arrows

With the exception of officers carrying pistols, anyone who brings any other prohibited weapon on site will be asked to return the weapon to his/her vehicle, or have it impounded by the NPS and returned after the event.

Weapon Safety, the Public, and You

To ensure the safety of participants and our visitors, a high degree of firearm discipline is expected of each and every participant.

- All weapons will remain under physical control of its owner at all times.
- No weapon is to be left unattended.
- Visitors are not allowed to handle or touch a loaded weapon.
- Visitors may touch an unloaded weapon so long as the owner maintains physical control of it. **DO NOT HAND YOUR WEAPON TO VISITORS.**

- Participants under the age of 16 may not handle weapons (firearms or edged weapons).
- NEVER point your weapon (firearm or edged weapon) at anyone at anytime.

Appropriate Drill Manuals

Appropriate drill manuals will be used by all participants handling/demonstrating historic weapons in the park. Acceptable manuals are:

- 1764 Manual Exercise
- Pickering's "Easy Plan of Discipline"
- Von Steuben's (not actually appropriate for 1775, but acceptable on grounds of safety)

Ammunition

Unless otherwise stated for a specific event, or prior arrangements have been made with the park's Historic Weapons Supervisor, do not bring any black powder with you into the park. If such arrangements have been made, the following criteria will apply:

- All black powder brought into NPS areas by outside individuals or groups must be in the form of prepared cartridges and be under NPS control when not actually in use during a demonstration. Bulk or loose black powder is absolutely prohibited.
- Cartridge construction will be of sturdy paper only. Use of staples or tape is prohibited.
- Maximum charges are as follows: Muskets 125 grains FFG, Rifles 90 grains FFG
- The use of FFFG powder is prohibited.
- Unused cartridges will be collected after each demonstration.
- Powder contained in powder horns is strictly prohibited. Powder horns containing powder will be confiscated and secured by the NPS.
- Participants under age 16 may not handle powder.

Inspections

- All small arms used in firing demonstrations will be inspected by the NPS once in the morning to ensure serviceability of the weapon, and then just prior to and immediately after every firing demonstration to ensure the weapon is clear.
- Weapons that pass the first morning inspection will be "tagged" by a small, unobtrusive piece of natural wool yarn (provided by the NPS).
- Weapons that fail inspection may not be carried. The owner must return the weapon to his/her vehicle or it will be secured by the NPS and returned at the end of the event.
- Weapons must meet the following standards to pass inspection
 1. secured flashguard and hammer stall
 2. no cracks or splits in the stock
 3. furniture and barrel fit securely to stock
 4. no missing stock pins or screws
 5. lock works smoothly
 6. half-cock position works properly
 7. flint is secured by leather or lead
 8. steel and spring are in good condition
 9. barrel free from visible dents or cracks

10. no excessive rust or corrosion on the barrel, lock and touch hole
11. no fouling in the barrel or on the lock

Firing Procedures

- All firing demonstrations taking place on park property may only be done under the direct supervision of a certified NPS black powder safety officer.
- For protection from flash burns, all demonstrators firing black powder firearms will wear natural fiber, long-sleeved outer garments or full uniforms as appropriate to their historical impression.
- Range safety standards will be observed at all times. Firing will commence or cease at the discretion of the supervising NPS black powder safety officer.

Misfire Procedures

Failure to spark:

1. Call out “misfire” and hold the musket in the firing position for 10 seconds to make sure there is no hang fire.
2. Return to the priming position
3. Check priming and flint. Wipe down the steel. If working with the flint, attach the hammerstall and dump priming.
4. Re-prime if necessary
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

Flash in the pan:

1. Call out “misfire” and hold the musket in the firing position for 10 seconds to make sure there is no hang fire.
2. Return to the priming position
3. Half-cock the piece, and reattach the hammerstall.
4. Pick out the touch-hole, wipe off the steel and flint and re-prime.
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

If, after following these procedures, the weapon still misses fire, you may retry three more times. If the weapon still will not fire, dump the charge and priming. The weapon is now out of the action.

Edged Weapons

- Edged weapons (swords, bayonets, knives, hatchets, spontoons, halberds etc.) may be drawn and brandished in a safe and prudent manner, when the bearer and the weapon are behind a barrier in a secure area out of the reach of visitors, i.e. officers carrying swords during the tactical demonstration, or infantrymen in a bayonet demonstration).
- At no time may participants engage in simulated combat with real or simulated edged weapons.
- When not behind a barrier, out amongst visitors, swords, knives, bayonets and the like may not be fully drawn. They may be partially drawn enough to expose some of the blade for visual inspection for interpretive purposes, but no visitor may touch the blade.
- Soldiers on sentry duty may fix bayonets but must keep the musket in a vertical position and the bearer must maintain control of the weapon.
- At no time may muskets be fired with the bayonet fixed.



Historic Black Powder Weapons Firing Permit

Before a unit can participate in a living history event involving historic black powder weapons at Minute Man NHP, each unit commander must sign a Historic Weapons Firing Permit, which includes a copy of the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations. This permit must be signed by the unit commander and returned to the event Black Powder Safety Officer by mail or fax two weeks prior to the event. The regulations are also available as a PDF file at

<http://www.nps.gov/mima/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm>

Mail the completed permit to:
Historic Weapons Supervisor
Minute Man National Historical Park
174 Liberty St.
Concord MA.
01742
Or fax to: (978) 318 – 7800

Unit Name: _____
Commander's Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City / State / Zip: _____
Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____
Email: _____

Please tell us about your unit's drill, weaponry, and the kinds of historic weapons demonstration programs you like to do.

In signing this permit, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations and have communicated the same to all participating members of my unit and will comply with them fully.

Commander's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Historic Weapons Supervisor

_____ Date: _____

Arrival, Logistics and Camping

Arrival

When your living history group is scheduled for an event at Minute Man National Historical Park, your arrival must be timed so as to take into account any set up time that you will need. For example, if you are scheduled for a day at Hartwell Tavern, you must be set up and ready to face the public by **9:30 a.m.** This means that you are fully dressed and accoutered, any displays are laid out and ready for viewing, and all vehicles are back up at the parking area.

If the unit is staying for the weekend, members are welcome to set up Friday afternoon or evening, provided that arrangements have been made with appropriate park staff, i.e. Volunteer Coordinator, Historic Weapons Supervisor, and/or Protection.

Logistics and Camping

There are ample fields suitable for camping at the Hartwell area. Camping areas will be laid out well before the event by the NPS and a representative of the participating unit, who will serve as the defacto quartermaster.

Minute Man NHP will provide wood, straw and potable water. Restrooms are close by the parking area. For larger events, portable toilets will be provided as necessary. All tents must be of period style. We ask that you keep tentage and camp equipment to a respectable minimum. For example, a military camp should look like a military camp. Soldiers were not provided with all the comforts of a handsomely furnished parlor. Distaff with an army would likewise be travelling relatively light. In general, all the items visible to the public should be such as can add to your impression (without risking health or safety!).

A word on campfires

Unless otherwise arranged with the NPS, the fire pit beside Hartwell Tavern is only area where a fire may be kept. A full bucket of water will be kept handy next to the fire AT ALL TIMES. Likewise, the fire will NEVER be left unattended.

April 19th, 1775: A Brief History

Spring came early to Massachusetts in 1775, but there was tension in the air. In country towns like Concord, Lincoln and Lexington, citizens were gathering arms, and militia companies were drilling on town commons.

In Boston, the town was under martial law. On the eve of the Revolution, there were 4,000 British troops quartered in Boston -- about one British soldier for every four inhabitants, a sizeable occupying force.

Things had been getting progressively worse. At the Boston Tea Party, colonists thinly disguised as Indians boarded a ship and threw bales of tea overboard in protest of Britain's taxes. Parliament retaliated by shutting down the port of Boston. This was a severe act which put a lot of people out of work and inflamed a bad situation. General Thomas Gage, who was in command of the British troops and also was the Governor of Massachusetts, had put a tight grip over affairs in Boston. But he had lost control of the countryside.

In the spring of 1775 the Massachusetts legislature, known as the Provincial Congress, had been meeting in Concord in defiance of General Gage who had ordered them to disband. John Hancock was the president of the Congress and Samuel Adams, that Revolutionary firebrand, was present as well. The Provincial Congress directed the towns to prepare, arm and drill their militia companies.

The militia was all of the able-bodied men from 16 to 60 who were expected to defend the town if necessary. In October of 1774 the Provincial Congress gave these instructions establishing the minutemen:

"Enlist one quarter at least of the... companies and form them into companies of 50 privates... who shall equip and hold themselves in readiness to march at the shortest notice."

From the original mustering of the Minutemen of Concord, we have these words:

"That we...will defend majesty King George III, his person crown and dignity. That we will at the same time to the utmost of our power and ability defend all and every of our chartered rights, liberties and privileges and will stand at a minute's warning with arms and ammunition to do so."

General Gage was doing his utmost to clamp down on the colonists' access to arms. In the countryside, the people responded by gathering and securing all the arms they could. Gage wrote:

"To keep quiet in the Town of Boston only will not terminate affairs. The troops must march into the country."

British Major John Pitcairn said:

"I am satisfied that one active campaign, a smart action, and burning two or three of their towns will set everything to rights. Nothing now, I am afraid, but this will ever convince these foolish bad people that England is in earnest."

In September of 1774, Gage began sending troops out of Boston to capture military supplies. 260 British soldiers marched from Boston Common down to Long Wharf. They got onto 13 barges and moved up the Mystic River past Bunker Hill. They landed and began their march. Their object was the Charlestown Powder House. Their mission was a smooth success, but the next day 4,000 colonists, many of them armed, gathered in the streets of Cambridge to protest.

Gage next sent Col. Alexander Leslie with 200 men by sea up to Salem to grab a cache of cannon. They landed at Marblehead and began the five-mile march to Salem. Men jumped on horseback and began spreading the alarm that British forces had landed. The British came to a raised draw bridge. On the other side militia and townspeople gathered. Col. Leslie insisted that the colonists lower the bridge and let them pass. But the colonists held firm. The stalemate ended without bloodshed as the British withdrew and re-boarded their ships for the return to Boston.

British Lt. Frederick Mackenzie wrote:

"It is certain both sides were ripe for it, and a single blow would have occasioned the commencement of hostilities."

Besides these raids for arms, Gage sent British soldiers out for exercise. One colonist reported:

"The troops marched over the people's land, some where their grain was sown and their gardens. They broke down the fences and walls."

The Provincial Congress resolved not to tolerate these excursions:

"Whenever the army under command of General Gage or any part to the number of 500 shall march out of the Town of Boston. The military force of the Province ought to be assembled and an army of observation immediately formed to act solely on the defensive."

British troops had marched out of Boston, putting into motion a network of alarm riders. Minute and militia companies gathered to observe the British and defend their liberty if necessary. The stage was set for the drama of Lexington and Concord.

Gage knew that the two largest stock piles of military supplies were in Worcester and Concord. Deciding that Worcester was much too far for a surprise raid, Gage set his sights on Concord. On the evening of April 18, 1775, 700 British soldiers were assembled on

Boston Common. This certainly did not go unnoticed by the colonists, and soon the alarm was spreading.

William Dawes went via the Boston Neck through Roxbury to spread the alarm. Paul Revere arranged for signal lanterns to be hung in Boston's North Church while he crossed the river to Charlestown, and from there began his ride. Dawes and Revere met in Lexington, at the home of Rev. Jonas Clark. It was here that John Hancock and Samuel Adams, who had just been meeting with the Provincial Congress, were staying as house guests. Revere, wanting to warn them, asked admittance. He was told that the family had retired and he was requested that they not be disturbed by any noise. Revere said, "Noise! You will have noise enough before long! The Regulars are coming out!"

Continuing on towards Concord, Revere and Dawes met up with Dr. Samuel Prescott, who was from Concord and was returning late after courting Lydia Mulliken in Lexington. Prescott offered to help Revere and Dawes spread the alarm. As they were going through Lincoln they were halted by a group of British officers on horseback who were blocking off the road to keep the alarm from spreading. Here are the words of Paul Revere:

"I saw four officers, who rode up to me with their pistols in their hands and said "God d--- you stop if you go an inch further you are a dead man. Immediately Mr. Prescott came up. We attempted to get through them, but they kept before us and swore that if we did not turn into that pasture they would blow our brains out... Mr. Prescott said "Put on!" He took to the left I to the right towards the wood at the bottom of the pasture intending, when I reached that, to jump my horse and run afoot. Just as I reached it, out started six officers, seized by bridle, put their pistols to my breast, and ordered me to dismount..."

Revere was captured and Dawes turned back, but Prescott escaped, and it was Prescott who carried the alarm through Lincoln and on into Concord. Revere was marched back towards Lexington and released, but his horse was taken away.

Meanwhile, the British troops were still crossing the Charles. They disembarked in a swampy area had to wade through mud and water to start their march. In command of the British expedition was Lt. Col. Francis Smith. Second in command was Major John Pitcairn. As they were marching, Smith could hear the occasional retort of gun fire and ringing of church bells signaling the militia. Realizing that there might be trouble, he set a dispatch back towards Boston requesting reinforcements.

At dawn the British Regulars arrived at Lexington Common. Standing at the far end were 77 members of the Lexington militia under the command of Captain John Parker. As Major Pitcairn led the British troops onto the Common, he shouted, "Lay down your arms, you Rebels!" Parker ordered his militia men to disperse. Unexpectedly, a random musket shot, followed by a few more discharges, sparked a brief (less than two minutes) but violent skirmish. It is unclear who fired first at Lexington; but those initial shots provoked British volleys. When the smoke cleared, eight Colonists lay dead and ten were wounded, as family members watched in horror. This was the first bloodshed of the Revolutionary War. Captain Parker said:

"I ordered our militia to meet on the common to consult what to do and concluded not to be discovered nor meddle... with [the] ...troops unless they should insult or molest us, and upon their sudden approach, I immediately ordered our militia to disperse and not to fire. Immediately said troops made their appearance and rushing furiously on fired upon and killed eight of our party."

William Tidd of Lexington related it this way:

"When the British had arrived within sight and were advancing on a quick march towards us, I distinctly heard one of their officers say 'Lay down your arms and disperse you rebels.' Then they fired upon us."

Major John Pitcairn, who was at the head of the column and leading the British soldiers, was angry that his troops had opened fire without any orders. He wrote:

"I called to the soldiers not to fire, but to surround and disarm the Rebels. Some of the Rebels who had jumped over the wall fired four or five shots at the soldiers which wounded a man of the 10th regiment. And my horse was wounded in two places and at the same time several shots were fired from a meeting house on our left. Upon this without any order or regularity the Light Infantry began a scattered fire... contrary to the repeated orders both of me and the officers that were present."

After the smoke had cleared, the British continued on their march towards Concord. Passing by the home of Samuel Hartwell and his family, Mary Hartwell was up doing her chores. She described the British column passing by:

"The army of the King marched up in fine order and their bayonets glistened in the sunlight like a field of waving grain. If it hadn't been for the purpose they came for I should say it was the handsomeness sight I ever saw in my life."

On the east edge of Concord, at Meriam's Corner, the militia of Concord was waiting, looking eastward for signs of the British troops. As the British column came into view the Americans turned around and marched into town ahead of them, and the fifes and drums of the colonists and the British redcoats played in unison. Amos Barrett said:

"...we was ordered to about face and marched before them with our drums and fifes a-going and also the British. We had grand music."

When the British got to the center of Concord, they split into detachments and began searching for the military stores. The colonists retreated to a hillside vantage point across the North Bridge. According to Rev. William Emerson:

"Some were for making a stand but others more prudent thought best to retreat until our strength should be equal to the enemy's. Accordingly we retreated over the Bridge."

Besides the Concord militia and minutemen, companies from the neighboring towns had arrived. Acton, Lincoln and Bedford came to help defend Concord. By midmorning the colonial ranks had swelled to about 400.

The British sent a detachment of three companies, or 96 men, to secure the North Bridge. Another four companies, about 120 British soldiers, went on to Col. Barrett's farm, where spy information had revealed the presence of artillery. Military supplies were also in barns and houses throughout the town. In the center of town British soldiers had thrown barrels of provisions into the mill pond and had found some gun carriages which they put into a pile and set on fire. The fire spread to the Town House and the townspeople, in particular an elderly widow named Martha Moulton, beseeched the British soldiers to put out the fire. She told it this way:

"They had set fire to the great gun carriages... and while they were in flames, I saw smoke arise out of the Town House... I did put my life... in my hand and ventured to beg of the officers to send some of their men to put out the fire. At last by one pail of water after another they set out and did extinguish the fire."

With the British pouring water on the fire, a great flume of smoke rose from the center of town. Up on the hill overlooking North Bridge, the colonists became enraged as they saw more and more smoke coming from the center of their town. The American officers debated whether to challenge the British soldiers guarding the Bridge. "Will you let them burn the town down" said Joseph Hosmer. Captain Isaac Davis of Acton said "I haven't a man who'se afraid to go." This was the moment of decision and the colonists resolved to advance on the Regulars and cross the bridge to save the town. They formed up into ranks and began the march down to the bridge.

Col. James Barrett said:

"I ordered the militia to march to the bridge but not to fire on the King's troops unless they were first fired upon."

British Ensign Jeremy Lister remarked on the good order and organization of the Americans:

"We saw a large body of men drawn up with the greatest regularity and approach'd us seemingly with intent to attack."

The British soldiers fell back across the Bridge, taking up a few planks on the way. As the colonists advanced, the British soldiers fired warning shots into the water. The Colonists continued on, and the British troops fired directly into the advancing ranks. Leading the colonists was Major John Buttrick, who gave the order "Fire, fellow soldiers, for God's sake fire!" The Americans unleashed their vengeance and the British soldiers fled.

According to British Ensign Jeremy Lister:

"Our companies were drawn up in order to fire Street firing, yet the weight of their firing was such that we was oblig'd to give way and run with the greatest precipitance..."

Two Colonists and two British soldiers were killed. Although it only lasted for about three minutes, the fight at the North Bridge is significant, for here was the first time that colonists were ordered to fire on the King's Troops. Today Daniel Chester French's Minute Man Statue overlooks the sight. This brief battle was later immortalized by the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson as "the shot heard 'round the world."

At about noon all of the British troops reassembled in Concord center and began the march back to Boston. Many of the colonists who had fought at North Bridge went across the fields north of Revolutionary Ridge to Meriam's Corner, where they were joined by fresh militia companies arriving from towns to the north. The British had flankers out on the ridge but they pulled them in to cross the bridge over Mill Brook. Gunfire broke out. Here at Meriam's Corner was the start of what we today call "Battle Road." The British troops heading back towards Boston had colonists firing at them from behind boulders, stone walls, trees, and houses all along the way.

At Brooks Hill, militia companies from Sudbury and Framingham joined the fight from the south. Further along, Major Laommi Baldwin, leading the Woburn militia, came upon the British at a turn in the road, made a quick attack, and retreated into the woods. Just as the British were reeling from Baldwin's attack they got caught in a cross-fire, as the Americans came across the fields and took up positions.

Rev. Edmund Foster wrote:

"The enemy retreated and were followed. We saw a wood at a distance which appeared to lie on or near the road the enemy must pass. Many leaped over the wall and made for that wood. There was then, on the opposite side of the road, a young growth of wood well filled with Americans. The enemy was now completely between two fires, renewed and briskly kept up. They ordered out a flank guard on the left to dislodge the Americans from their posts behind large trees. But they only became a better mark to be shot at. A short but sharp contest ensued, at which the enemy received more deadly injury than at any one place from Concord to Charlestown. Eight or more of their number were killed on the spot and no doubt many wounded."

Known today as Bloody Angle, this was one of the hottest actions of the day. The colonists were able to get a good position because it was one of the few well-wooded areas.

Unlike today, the 18th-century landscape was very open, consisting of farmed fields. The common myth of the fighting on Battle Road is that the colonists hid in the woods and the British were easy targets marching down the road. In reality the British were not easy marks -- they were a formidable enemy. The main column of Grenadiers marched down the road, but the Light Infantry were deployed as flankers moving out through the fields and keeping the colonists back away from the main British column. For much of the battle the colonists had trouble getting close to the British, but they did keep up a steady, harassing gunfire.

According to her descendants, Mary Hartwell remembered the battle as it passed her house:

"I saw them coming back in the afternoon, all in confusion, wild with rage and loud with threats. I knew there had been trouble and that it had not resulted favorably for that retreating army. I heard the musket shots just below by the Old Brooks Tavern and trembled believing that our folks were killed. Some of the rough, angry soldiers rushed up to this house and fired in but fortunately for me and the children the shots went into the garret and we were safe. How glad I was when they all got by the house and your grandfather and our neighbors reached home alive."

British Ens. John Barker wrote:

"The country was an amazing strong one, full of hills, woods, stonewalls, etc. which the rebels did not fail to take advantage of for they were all lined with people who kept an incessant fire upon us, as we did too upon them, but not with the same advantage for they were so concealed there was hardly any seeing them. In this way we marched between nine and ten miles, their numbers increasing from all parts, while ours was reducing from deaths, wounds and fatigue. And we were totally surrounded by such an incessant fire as it is impossible to conceive."

As the British troops approached the Lexington-Lincoln line, Captain Parker and the Lexington militia were waiting to avenge the deaths on Lexington Green. Emotions ran high, since British troops had killed eight of the Lexington men and wounded ten others early that morning on the town Common. As the British column came into range, the Colonists fired. This action is known today as Parker's Revenge. Nathan Munroe, Lexington Militia Man said,

"About the middle of the forenoon, Capt. Parker, having collected part of his company, marched them towards Concord, I being with them. We met the regulars in the bounds of Lincoln, retreating towards Boston. We fired on them, and continued so to do until they met their reinforcements in Lexington."

The hot fire from the colonists continued around the Bluff and through Fiske Hill. There was intense fighting as the British flankers tried to flush out the colonists and keep them away from the column. The British Commander, Colonel Smith, was wounded, and Major Pitcairn's horse was spooked by gunfire and threw him off.

Minuteman James Hayward of Acton was getting a drink at the well near Ebenezer Fiske's house. A British soldier, seeing him, raised his musket and said "You are a dead man." "And so are you" replied Hayward. Both men fired. The British soldier fell dead and Hayward was mortally wounded.

British Ensign Henry De Berniere wrote:

"All the hills on each side of us were covered with Rebels so that they kept the road always lined and a very hot fire on us without intermission. We had first kept our order and returned their fire as hot as we received it. But when we arrived within a mile of Lexington, our ammunition began to fail and the

Light companies were so fatigued with flanking they were scarce able to act. And a great number of wounded scarce able to get forward made of great confusion. Col. Smith our commanding officer had received a wound through his leg. A number of officers were also wounded so that we began to run rather than retreat."

The British redcoats had broken into a run as they came into Lexington Center. Luckily for them, relief had finally come. A brigade of a thousand fresh troops, led by Hugh, Earl Percy, was waiting. Percy had brought two cannon and fired them off, which made the colonists scatter and enabled the beleaguered British troops to regroup.

The British force now numbered about 1700, and they continued their march through Lexington and into Menotomy (present-day Arlington.) By this time there were over 3,000 colonists firing upon the British.

Colonists were hiding in houses along the road to get as close as possible for a good shot. Percy had burned some houses in Lexington as a warning to the colonial snipers. The British flankers were going through every house to flush out the colonists. Discipline had broken down and they had begun looting.

According to British Lt. Frederick McKenzie,

"Many houses were plundered by the soldiers notwithstanding the efforts of the officers to prevent it. I have no doubt that this inflamed the rebels and made many of them follow us farther than they would otherwise had done. By all accounts some soldiers who stayed too long in the houses were killed in the very act of plundering by those who layed concealed in them."

In Menotomy was the fiercest fighting of the day. Here both sides lost more men than in any other fighting along the Battle Road. Percy had to use his cannon several times to scatter the Americans pressuring him at the rear. Percy said,

"We retired... under an incessant fire, which like a moving circle surrounded and followed us wherever we went."

The fighting continued into Cambridge, and finally at sundown the exhausted British troops reached safety. They arrived at Charlestown, where a British warship in the harbor protected them. They had marched 20 miles out to Concord, fought all along the return, and were exhausted.

Before April 19th, Lord Sandwich had said:

Suppose the colonies abound in men, what does that signify? They are raw, undisciplined, cowardly men... the very sound of a cannon would carry them off as fast as their feet would carry them."

But on the day after April 19th, Lord Percy wrote:

"Many of them advanced within ten yards to fire at men and other officers, tho' they were morally certain of being put to death themselves in an instant... I never believed, I confess, that they would have attacked the King's

troops... Whoever dares to look upon them as an irregular mob, will find himself much mistaken. They have men amongst them who know very well what they are about."

The total casualties for the British redcoats were 273, and for the Colonists, 95, killed, wounded or missing.

John Andrews, writing from Boston said:

"I stood upon the hills in town and saw the engagement very plain. It was very bloody. When I reflect and consider that the fight was between those whose parents but a few generations were brothers, I shudder at the thought, and there is no knowing where our calamities will end."

Of the colonial troops who came together on Battle Road, not all returned home that evening. Many stayed, and campfires sprung up in a ring around Boston. The Siege of Boston had begun. In the following days militia companies continued to arrive from places like Connecticut and New Hampshire. Altogether, about 20,000 Colonial militia men answered the alarm.

The colonists had the British army bottled up in Boston. Never again would British redcoats march out into the countryside. Now that the colonists had Boston surrounded, they resolved to drive the British forces out of town.

A British officer, Lt. Williams remarked on how Boston was left to the British army:

"I walked through the town and was much affected of the sight of it, in a manner abandoned, almost every other shop shut up... The trade of Boston must have been very extensive... The great number of store houses and wharves shows it plainly. I can't help looking on it as a ruined town and I... see the grass growing in every street. Charlestown lays on the opposite side of the harbor and the rebels have possession of it which greatly surprised me as it lays so near to us and might be so easily burnt."

One night in June of 1775 the colonists fortified the heights in Charlestown. General Gage deployed troops to take the hill. A bloody battle, known as The Battle of Bunker Hill, ensued. The British gained a small victory in the first major battle of the Revolution, but at great cost. Of the 2,200 British troops who fought, over 1,000 were casualties. General Clinton said, "It was a dear bought victory. Another such would have ruined us."

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia the Continental Congress was meeting. John Adams made a crucial motion:

"I rose in my place and represented the state of the colonies, the uncertainty in the minds of the people, their great expectation and anxiety, the distresses of the army and the probability that the British Army would take advantage of our delays, march out of Boston and spread desolation as far as they could go. I concluded with a motion that Congress adopt the army at Cambridge and appoint a general.

I had no hesitation to declare that I had but one gentleman in my mind for that important command. And that was a gentleman from Virginia whose skill and experience as an officer... great talents, and universal character would command the respect of America and unite the exertions of all the colonies..."

On July 2, 1775, George Washington arrived in Cambridge and the New England army became the Continental army. In addition to the challenges of organizing the army, Washington had a great need for more artillery. He looked to the guns at Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York, which had been captured in May, one month after the battles at Lexington and Concord, by Ethan Allan and Benedict Arnold. Washington sent Henry Knox, a former book seller, to travel to upstate New York and bring the cannon back to Boston. Over the winter of '75-'76, Knox's "noble train of artillery" was hauled over the snow to Boston.

At dawn on March 5, 1776, the astonished British looked up at Dorchester Heights. In one night of amazing effort, Knox's artillery had been put in place and earthworks had been built. The British realized that their position was now indefensible and, without a battle, the British left Boston.

The war was over in Massachusetts, but the struggle by Washington and the Continental soldiers would be a long one. Battles continued north into Canada and south through the colonies. The last major battle was the American victory at Yorktown, Virginia, in October of 1781. The war officially ended in 1783 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Eight long bitter years after the first battles at Lexington and Concord, the war was over. America had won its independence.

Years later, veteran Levi Preston was asked why he risked his life to face the British troops on that fateful April morning. He replied,

"We had always governed ourselves and we always meant to. They didn't mean that we should."

On a spring day in 1775, all of the debate about liberty and the rights of self-government became action. A war began which would end in independence for the American colonies. Our French allies took home revolutionary ideas and in the generations to follow people continued to battle for the ideas and institutions for which the men of Massachusetts fought and died. Today many observers trace the beginning of the end of the world's colonial systems back to April 19th, 1775. The shots fired then still reverberate around the world.

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